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10 July 1951

## MEMORANDUM FOR GENERAL SMITH

In January NSC approved a draft Executive Order to establish  
MINIMUM STANDARDS FOR HANDLING AND TRANSMISSION OF CLASSIFIED INFORMATION.

At President's direction NSC is requested to consider a redraft (SEE TAB REDRAFT) prepared by White House Staff, which is substantially the same as the NSC-approved draft except that it attempts to redefine the security classifications and adds the word "Security" to each classification, that is, "Top Secret Security," "Secret Security," etc.

In attached memorandum of 6 July, Senior NSC Staff RECOMMENDS that the White House redraft be amended to provide that: security classifications currently in use be retained, that is, "Top Secret," "Secret," etc.; that all classified material be clearly marked with words "Security Information" in addition to its assigned security classification; and that editorial changes be made. White House Staff assisted NSC Staff in preparation of recommended amendments.

Colonel Sheffield Edwards concurs in above recommendation because:

1. To change security markings at this time would involve a great deal of expense and work in making up new stamps and remarking all old documents.

2. After prolonged negotiations US has an agreement with its major allies on standard security markings and to adopt different markings would cause confusion.

On this document there has been no split at the Senior Staff level. They have also agreed this order should not be retroactive, that it would not be necessary to go back and mark old documents.

JCS Memo, 11 July (SEE TAB) not included in this brief follows.

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EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT  
NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL  
WASHINGTON

Memo  
6  
July

July 6, 1951

MEMORANDUM FOR THE NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL

SUBJECT: Minimum Standards for the Handling and Transmission  
of Classified Information

REFERENCES: A. Memo for NSC from Executive Secretary, same  
subject, dated January 2, 1951  
B. Memo for NSC from Executive Secretary, same  
subject, dated June 19, 1951

The Senior NSC Staff, with the assistance of senior representatives from the Departments of Justice and Commerce, the Atomic Energy Commission, the White House Staff and the Bureau of the Budget, has considered the draft executive order on the subject attached to Reference B, and recommends to the National Security Council for its consideration the following changes therein:

Page 3, paragraph 3: Revise the first sentence to read as follows: There shall be four categories of classified security information which, in descending order of importance to national security, shall carry the following designations: "Top Secret," "Secret," "Confidential," and "Restricted;" in addition to being specifically identified as "Security Information."

Page 3, paragraph 4: In the second sentence after the words "herein prescribed," insert "combined with the identification 'Security Information.'"

Page 17, subparagraph d: In the third line omit the words "within his agency."

Page 17, paragraph 33: Omit the last two sentences of the paragraph and substitute the following:

In order to identify classified security information and to distinguish it from non-security information, classified material must always be clearly marked with the words "Security Information" in addition to its assigned security classification.

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Page 21, subparagraph (b) under the heading "Top Secret Security Material": Delete subparagraph (b) and substitute the following:

(b) The transmission of "Top Secret" security information shall be effected (1) preferably by direct contact of officials concerned or alternatively by specifically designated personnel, by State Department diplomatic pouch, by a messenger-courier system especially created for that purpose, or by electric means in encrypted form; (2) in the case of information originated by an investigative or intelligence branch of a department or agency of the United States, which is transmitted only to authorized personnel of such investigative or intelligence branch, by any means of communication currently approved by the head of such branch for use in transmitting "Top Secret" security information, except that such information shall not be construed to have originated in his branch if it is developed from "Top Secret" security information received from any other department or agency; or (3) in the case of information originated in one department or agency of the United States and transmitted by it to another department or agency of the United States, the latter may transmit such information to its authorized personnel by registered mail if agreed upon, in general or in a particular case, by the heads of the departments or agencies concerned.

Page 21, subparagraph b (2): In line 1, replace "delivered" with "transmitted."

In line 3, delete "or" at the end of line.

In line 4, add after "registered mail", the phrase "or by protected commercial express air or surface."

Page 22: In line 3, delete the words "by State Department diplomatic pouch."

In line 9, replace "to and from" with "between."

Revise line 10 to read: "and/or Canadian Government installations in Continental United States, Canada and Alaska by United States and Canadian."

Page 22, subparagraph (3): In line 2, replace "delivered" with "transmitted."

In line 3, delete "by authorized courier or"

In line 4, insert after "ordinary mail" the phrase "or by express or freight under such specific conditions as may be prescribed by the head of the department or agency concerned."

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Page 22, subparagraph (4): In lines 1 and 4, replace "delivered" with "transmitted."

In line 3, delete "ordinary mail."

Page 25, subparagraph (1) under the heading "Methods of Destruction": In the second sentence omit the words "under the most unusual circumstances" and begin the sentence with "The head of an agency."

General: Whenever the terms "Top Secret Security," "Secret Security," "Confidential Security," and "Restricted Security" appear throughout the draft executive order, revise to read "'Top Secret' security information," "'Secret' security information," "'Confidential' security information," and "'Restricted' security information." Appropriate editorial revisions in conformity with the above changes will be required. For example, the words "material" and "information" should be deleted following the terms "'Top Secret' security information," "'Secret' security information," and so forth.

JAMES S. LAY, Jr.  
Executive Secretary

cc: The Secretary of the Treasury  
The Attorney General  
The Secretary of Commerce  
The Director of Defense Mobilization  
The Chairman, Atomic Energy Commission  
The Director, Bureau of the Budget

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